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NC POLICY WATCH

Stories & voices
that **matter.**

UNC Board of Governors squares off over new healthcare partnership

By [Joe Killian](#)

A [proposed partnership](#) between Charlotte-based [Carolinas HealthCare System](#) and [UNC Health Care](#) is further dividing an already fractured UNC Board of Governors.

When the board meets Friday morning, it will be amid [cross-accusations of illegal and unethical behavior](#) over the proposal, which would create one of the country's largest healthcare systems.

At issue: a potential consolidation that would create a new UNC Health Care/Carolinas HealthCare joint operation that would include more than 50 hospitals and employ more than 90,000 people.

The new venture, first proposed in August and expected to be finalized early this year, would be overseen by an independent board. But in their role overseeing UNC's medical school, the board of governors have hotly debated the deal and whether they can block it if they find it not in the system's best interest.

On Thursday, a special committee met in closed session to debate the deal and the board of governors' proper place in it. In another closed session Friday, the full board will continue the conversation.

But one member of the board made an already complicated issue even more fraught last week.

Tom Fetzer, a former Raleigh mayor and one-time head of the North Carolina GOP, joined the board last year. Since then, [he and a group of the board's most conservative members](#) have repeatedly [locked horns with UNC System President Margaret Spellings and with board chairman Louis Bissette, Jr.](#)

As a lobbyist for Blue Cross and Blue Shield and WakeMed Health & Hospitals, Fetzer has had to recuse himself from the board's discussion of a UNC Health Care/Carolinas HealthCare partnership. Blue Cross and Blue Shield, as the state's largest healthcare insurer, would likely have to pay higher fees under the proposed partnership, which would compete with WakeMed Health & Hospitals. [\[Read more...\]](#)

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